



AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY
Love for All, Hatred for None

Garden of Peace

A Monthly Newsletter for New Converts



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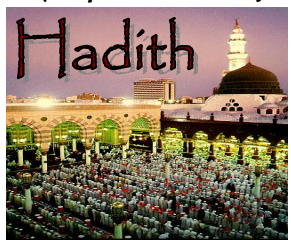
'Most of all it is my purpose to plant once more in the hearts of people the pure and shining unity of God.' -Promised Messiah (as)



The Holy Quran

The month of Ramadan is that in which the Qur'an was revealed as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and discrimination.

(Chapter 2:Verse 186)



Hadith

Abu Huraira related that the Prophet (saw) said: Whoever fasts during Ramadan with faith and seeking his reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven. Whoever prays during the nights in Ramadan with faith and seeking his reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven. And he who passes Lailat al-Qadr in prayer with faith and seeking his reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven (Bukhari, Muslim)



Ramadan and its Essences

For every spiritual exercise in Islam the ultimate aim is the attainment of God's pleasure through the regulation of one's life in accordance with His ordinances. Of the five articles of faith of Islam, the fourth is fasting during the month of Ramadan. The Holy Quran states: *O ye who believe, fasting is prescribed for you during a fixed number of days, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may (safeguard yourselves against moral and spiritual ills and) become righteous. But whoso from among you should be ailing, or should be on a journey, shall complete the reckoning by fasting on a corresponding number of other days; and for those who find fasting a strain hard to bear is an expiation, the feeding of a poor person (if they can afford it). Whoso carries through a good work with eager obedience, it is the better for him. If you had knowledge you would realize that it is better for you that you should fast. The month of Ramadan is the month in which the Quran began to be revealed, the Book which comprises guidance for mankind and*

clear proofs of guidance and divine Signs which discriminate between truth and falsehood. Therefore, he who witnesses this month, being stationary and in health should fast through it. But whoso, is ailing or is on a journey, should complete the reckoning by fasting on a corresponding number of other days. Allah desires ease for you and desires not hardship for you; He has granted you this facility so that you should encounter no hardship in completing the reckoning and that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful to Him. (Ch. 2:184-186)

Fasting is an old universal institution, practiced since ancient times. A study of the Old Testament books, Exodus and Samuel shows that Moses (as) and other Israelite Prophets observed the ritual of fasting on important occasions. So did Jesus (as), as is said of him in Matt. 4:2-3: 'And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, then he felt hungry' Indeed, Jesus (as) is reported to have told his disciples in Matt. 17, that evil spirits cannot be exorcised except through prayer and fasting. In Matt. 6 he appears to have gone to considerable lengths to describe the manner in which fasting should be carried out. He says: 'But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face. That you appear not to men to fast, but to your Father which is in secret: and your Father, which sees in secret, shall reward you openly.' (Matthew 6:17-18) In *Encyclopedia Britannica*, p.104 Vol. IX, Fasting is explained as follows: Commonest by far, however, of all the uses of voluntary fasting, in the past and at the present time, is its practice as an act of self-denial with definite religious intention. By the greater number of religions, in the lower middle and higher cultures alike, fasting is largely prescribed, and where it is not required it is nevertheless practiced to some extent by individuals in response to the prompting of nature.'

Objectives of Fasting

The Qur'anic verse quoted at the beginning, stipulates three objectives for fasting:

1. 'So that you may become righteous': The very act of fasting to comply with the commandment of Allah, creates a sense of obedience to Him which leads man to conduct his life generally in accordance with His wishes, avoiding evil tendencies and doing good all round for the attainment of His pleasure. Thus is righteousness achieved.
2. 'That you may exalt Allah for His having guided you': The prime object of man's creation is to exalt Allah and that is why during the month of Ramadan and during the Eid prayers following it considerable stress is laid on the recitation of *Takbir*.
3. 'That you may be grateful': This is a necessary corollary to the attainment of the two preceding objectives.

Attributes of the month of Ramadan

The month of Ramadan carries many special attributes which have been described by no less an authority than the Holy Prophet (saw) himself. Some of these are:

The Opener of paradise: Abu Huraira relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said that from the first night of the month of Ramadan, satanic forces are chained, rebellious elements are disciplined and the shutters of Hell are drawn without exception. All the Gates of Paradise are opened and a crier shouts: 'O the seeker of righteous deeds proceed, and O the recliner to evil intentions desists'. Many sinners are granted amnesty from Hell, and this occurs every night of the month'. (Bukhari).

Abstention from evil tendencies: Abu Huraira says that the Holy Prophet (saw) said: *When Ramadan arrives the gates of paradise are opened and the gates of hell are locked up and Satans are put in chains. (Bukhari and Muslim).*

Month of Munificent Charity: Ibn Abbas relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) was the most generous of men and he was at his most bountiful during Ramadan when Gabriel visited him every night and recited the Quran to him. During this period the bounty of the Holy Prophet (saw) waxed faster than the rain-bearing breeze (Bukhari and Muslim).

Intercession from the Quran and the fast: Abdullah bin Omar says that the Holy Prophet (saw) said that the fasting and the Quran intercede with Allah on behalf of a servant. Fast shall say: *O my Lord, I kept this man from food and other physical comforts throughout the day, so please God, condescend to my intercession on his behalf.* And the Quran will plead: *I kept him away from sleep at night, so please accept my recommendation for him. Both these intercessions would be carried.*

Basic purpose of fasting: Abu Huraira relates that the Holy Prophet (saw), said that if one did not eschew falsehood and false conduct, Allah has no need that he should abstain from eating and drinking (Bukhari). In Arabic language, falsehood includes wrong deeds, illegal means, bribery, adulteration, etc.

Excellence of fasting over other exercises: Abu Huraira relates that the Holy Prophet (saw), said: 'A man's good works carry multiple rewards, from ten times to seven hundred times. Allah says: A fast is an exception, for it is observed for My sake and I shall bestow the reward for it. He who observes a fast gives up his passion and his food for My sake. For such a one there are two joys: a joy when he breaks his fast and a joy when he meets his Lord. His breath is purer in the estimation of Allah than the fragrance of musk. The fast is a shield. When any of you is fasting he should eschew loose talk and noisy exchanges. Should anyone revile him or seek to pick a quarrel with him, he should respond: I am observing a fast'. (Bukhari).

RAYYAN – chambers of Paradise: Saad ibn Sahl relates that the Holy Prophet (saw), said: There is a gate of paradise called Rayyan through which only those will enter on the Day of Judgment who are regular in observing the fast and no one else. A call will go forth: 'Where are those who observed the fast regularly? And they will step forth and no one beside them will enter through that gate. After they have entered the gate will be closed and no one else will enter from it'. (Bukhari and Muslim).

◊ **Fasting-a peerless act:** Abu Imamah relates that he asked the Holy Prophet (saw) for advice which could be beneficial to him from God, and he replied that he should keep fasts for there was nothing quite like them.

◊ **Skipping fast without excuse:** Abu Huraira relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said that anyone who did not fast on any of the days of Ramadan without lawful excuse or illness would never be able to ransom the loss even if he fasted for the rest of his life.

◊ **Hypocritical fasting:** Abu Huraira relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said: Many a fasting person had nothing except the suffering of thirst, and many a person standing in nightly prayers had nothing but suffering sleeplessness – and no reward.

The above quotations from the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Holy Prophet (saw), give a clear and concise indication of the true aims and objects of fasting and their beneficial status in the society of Islam.

◊ **Rules of Fasting**

We now turn to the conditions attached to this important institution in Islam.

Beginning the month of Ramadan: Abu Huraira relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said: start the month after sighting the new moon and end it at the next sighting. If the vision is clouded then calculate at the end of the 30th day of the month of Sha'aban (Muslim). Ibn Abbas relates that a man from the outskirts of the town came to the Holy Prophet (saw) and reported that he had sighted the moon. The Holy Prophet (saw) asked him whether he would state this on oath that there was no God but Allah and that Muhammad was His Messenger. The man took the oath, whereupon the Holy Prophet (saw) instructed Bilal to announce that people should start fasting the next morning.

Pre-dawn meals: Anas says: the Holy Prophet (saw) said: serve yourselves with breakfast, for they are blessed. (Bukhari). In Masnadi-Ahmad it is written that pre-dawn meals are blessed, therefore they should not be left out even though it may consist of a mouthful of water, for God and His angels shower blessings upon those who partake of pre-dawn meals. Amr ibn Aas says: the Holy Prophet (saw) said: *the distinctive feature between our fasts and those of the people of the Book is the eating of breakfast (Muslim)*. Anas says that Zaid bin Thabit told him that the Holy Prophet (saw) took pre-dawn meals with them and then led the prayers. I asked, how long was the interval between the meals and the call for prayers and he answered that it was the time required for the recital of fifty verses (Bukhari).

Early breaking of fast: Sahl ibn Sa'ad relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said: My people will adhere to good as long as they do not delay the breaking of the fast (Bukhari). In another Hadith, Abu Huraira relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said that Allah, the Lord of honor and glory proclaimed: Of My servants I love most those who are foremost in breaking their fasts (Tirmidhi). In view of these sayings of the Holy Prophet (saw) and of God Almighty, it is essential that a fast should be ended immediately after the sunset as there is no merit in prolonging it beyond this point.

Anticipation of Ramadan with one or two fasts: Abu Huraira relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said: Do not observe the fast on two days preceding Ramadan, but this does not apply to one who has made a practice of it (Bukhari and Muslim).

Eating or drinking by mistake: Abu Huraira relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said: Should any of you eat or drink in forgetfulness of the fast, he should continue his fast till the end, for Allah has fed him and given him to drink. (Bukhari)

Fasting procedure: A person must express his or her intention to fast in words such as: 'I hereby express my intention to keep the fast of tomorrow during the month of Ramadan.'

Fitr contributions: At the end of the month of Ramadan there is a small contribution on behalf of all members of the family to be used for the benefit of the needy. It is reported that the Holy Prophet (saw) prescribed this contribution at the end of Ramadan. It was then equivalent to a measure of dates or cereals, payable by every free person or servant, male or female, young or old from amongst the believers.

Expiation: Persons suffering from illness or those who cannot fast due to old age should expiate the omission by feeding a person for every day of the month of Ramadan, provided of course they are financially able to do so. This type of feeding or paying of an equivalent amount on behalf of a deceased is also permissible.

Fasting and Health: The Holy Prophet (saw) is reported to have said: Keep fasts to gain health. Thus, fasting is not only a spiritual exercise but also beneficial physically; it is particularly useful for the treatment of obesity and blood pressure.

Extracts from Ramadan and its Essences: by the late Sheikh Mubarik Ahmad, ex-Missionary-in-Charge, Ahmadiyya Movement (U.K.) – This article was first published in the Muslim Herald in July 1979

Ahmadiyya is the Home I Have Been Seeking for the Last 30 Years



“Allah says in the Holy Quran that Muslim men and women are friends to one another. So, once you understand that there is no greater love than one who is willing to lay down their life for the love of Allah, then you will know that not only are Muslim men and women friends to one another, but their lives without each other are like bodies without souls.” Br. Jihad - Anthony Galloway

Br. Jihad fka Anthony Galloway had been seeking true Islam since the early 1970's, it was told that he tried numerous factions of Islam but his hunger and thirst were not satisfied until he was introduced to The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, the True Islam. Brother Jihad had accepted Ahmadiyyat at the Alexander Correctional Institution in North Carolina. Upon his release early in August of this year, Brother Jihad has brothers and family that wanted him to live with them but he chose to deny this most gracious invitation to live temporarily in a Men's shelter in Charlotte so he can be in close company with the brothers of the Charlotte Jamaat (community). He declared that he was at home and Ahmadiyya Islam is the home he has been seeking for the last thirty years.

Jazakallah for Br. Jihad for his great sacrifices and welcome to our blessed community here at Charlotte where he is among his brothers in Islam forever. May Allah, the Almighty, bless him in every walk of his life, Ameen!

Inspiring Bait, Inspiring Story...

Charles A Pressler, a white, American-born sixteen years old from Gaffney, NC got attracted to Islam through reading the Holy Quran. Charles's father always said to him that he could learn about a man and his culture by learning that man's religion. A son of a Jewish father and a Christian mother, Charles thought he was satisfied with his religion of Mormonism but in reality, he wasn't and that's why his quest for the truth was increasing by days. Charles was always deeply fascinated by the spiritualities of other cultures. He attended different places of worships in search for the 'truth' and to quench the spiritual thirst that arose in his young heart.

Charles was not alone. His father, Charles, also joined him in the 'search'. Three years ago, in 2004, Charles' father started studying Torah while Charles bought an anglicized version of the Quran. Soon after he started reading the Quran, he had his father help him study the Quran. Very quickly, the dazzling beauty of the divine book fascinated both the father and son. Their eyes were opened to the wonder and mercy of ALLAH. They had a number of questions in their minds that needed to be addressed right away. First thing came to their minds was to visit a mosque where they could get their questions answered. But, how would they find a mosque. Suddenly, it dawned on Charles' father – how about talking to the owner of the convenient store down the street? They seemed like Muslims. Desperate and unsure, Charles' father asked the owner of the store if they were Muslims. By Allah's infinite grace and blessings, they were, in fact, Muslims – Ahmadi Muslims. The next question was 'how can we find a mosque'? And the answer was easy – 'please visit 'Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Charlotte' located in Huntersville, NC'. And since then Charles and his father did not look back. That was only the start of a new journey for both of them.

Charles started visiting Charlotte mosque for Jumma prayers and other monthly meetings on a regular basis. The jamat members including the local President of Charlotte Jamat – Brother Nadeem Faizi, addressed all his questions. Both Charles and his father also had an opportunity to meet and discuss their questions on Islam with the Regional Missionary Zaki Kauser Sahib. The discussions alone did not quench Charles' thirst. He started borrowing different Islamic books and literatures from Charlotte Jamaat library. The more he studied the more it made sense to him. Everyday, he learned something new on Islam. The Holy Quran, the hadiths, Huzoor's sermons and other Islamic books and literatures only reinforced the simplicity, clarity, and beauty of the message of Islam to Charles. Before long, he realized this was what he had been looking for so long; this was what made the most sense of all. This was it!



Sunday, August 5, 2007, is a special day in Charles' life. Both his parents joined him at the Charlotte Mosque as he was going to embrace a new religion on this day. After coming to the mosque on Sunday, Charles expressed his feelings and desires to formally join the fold of Islam. This was not the only thing – he also wanted to start his spiritual journey with a new name - **Muhsin Rahim Pressler**.

MashaAllah, what a beautiful way to start a new episode of life! Young Charles' father whole-heartedly approved his son's decision on becoming an Ahmadi Muslim.

Garden of Peace Team



Invalidating the Fast

Those which Invalidate Fasting and Require Qada' only (making up for the missed day or days, a day for a day). This category includes:

1. Eating and/or drinking deliberately (including par-taking non-nourishing items by the mouth).
2. Deliberately causing one self to vomit.
3. The beginning of menstruation or post-childbirth bleeding even in the last moment before sunset.
4. Ejaculation for reasons other than sexual intercourse.
5. Eating, drinking, smoking or having sexual intercourse after Fajr (dawn) on the mistaken assumption that it is not Fajr time yet. Similarly, engaging in these acts before Maghrib (sunset) on the mistaken assumption that it is already Maghrib time.

Desirable Things During Fasting

1. To take a night meal (called Suhoor) as close to Fajr time as possible. Prophet Muhammad (saw) says: "Partake Suhoor for there is blessing in Su-hoor." (Bukhari & Muslim.). The blessings of Suhoor include strengthening the fasting person, enabling him/her to continue to be active during the day, and making fasting tolerable.'
2. To break the fast as soon as one is sure that the sun has set. Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: "If any of you was fasting, let him break the fast with dates. If he can't find dates let him break the fast with water for water is wholesome." (at-Tirmidhi).
3. When breaking the fast, it is recommended to make Du'aa (prayer). Following are two versions of the Prophet's Du'aa. ALLAHUMMAA LAKA SUMTU WA 'ALA RIZQIKA AFTARTU "O Allah! For you did I fast and with your bounties did I break the fast." (Abu Dawood). DHA-HABADH-DHAMA 'U WAB-TALLATILUROOQU WA THABATAL-AJRU JN-SHA ALLAH "Gone is the thirst and moistured are the veins and achieved is the reward by the will of Allah." (Abu Dawood)
4. To avoid any act, which is contradictory to fasting, the Prophet (saw) said: "Fasting is not (mere) refraining from food and drink. Fasting is refraining from vain talk and indecency. And if one slanders you or aggresses against you, say I am fasting, I am fasting." (al-Hakim).
5. To be more generous especially to the poor and to spend more time studying the Quran. Also to have more voluntary Salat (prayer) especially in the last ten days of Ramadan. During Ramadan, this voluntary Salat is called (Taraweeh Prayer). Several authentic Ahadith show that the Prophet (saw) prayed only eight Rak'ah plus three Witr for a total of eleven Rak'ah. (al- Bukhari). Some early Muslims used to pray twenty Rak'ah instead of eight. Taraweeh prayer can be said individually or in a group (which is better, especially in the Masjid).

Mosques Around the World

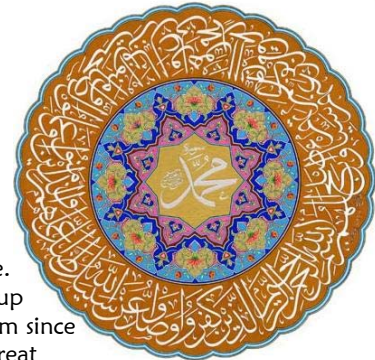


Al-Fatih Mosque, Bahrain



Announcement from the Editor

Assalamo Alaikom Wa Rahmatullah Wa BarakatuHu,
Dear Brother, Ramadan is the holy month of the year where all Muslims focus on the only purpose of creation which is worship. So, let us take this opportunity to seek forgiveness, blessings and comfort from God. Happy Ramadan and May Allah shower His blessings on you, Ameen.
The power of knowledge is the key for wisdom. Like, I mentioned before, if you need any books or literature, please feel free to contact us and we will send you the literature, InshaAllah. In addition, please contact us with any questions you may have about Islam. Moreover, I would love to publish your articles, poems, experiences, or profiles. Please write to the newsletter address below for your submission. Jazakallah (thank you) for being part of the Garden of Peace family and May Allah bless you and guide you further in your journey, Ameen. Humbly, *Ahmad Antar*



I have recently become a Muslim. However, I fear rejection and "weird looks" from my family and close friends if they learn about my conversion. What should I do?

Assalamo Alaikum my Dear Brother,
Each situation is different, and there is no one-size-fits-all answer to this question. However, the Holy Quran and the glorious history of Islam offer us some prominent examples that can guide us in these situations. The Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (saw), was himself the very first Muslim and as such suffered most rejection that anyone could face. His people boycotted him socially and economically, his life was threatened, he was forced to leave the city he grew up in, people hurled abusive language at him and he was pelted with stones and filth. His own dear uncle, who raised him since childhood, beseeched him to give up the message of Islam. So what did Prophet Muhammad (saw) do? He showed great perseverance. He replied back with love and prayers, not even a harsh word came out of his mouth at these excesses. It was his love, his character, his prayers, and his truthfulness that eventually won over the sea of hatred that engulfed him in his early days. So the life of this beloved Prophet of Allah should be our guide under these tough circumstances. If one goes through hard times through perseverance, and prayers, it only makes one much stronger spiritually. The initial "rejection" may be a great blessing in disguise later on.
If the new convert feels weak under the circumstances, the Holy Quran also mentions the story of the wife of Pharaoh with words of great praise. Pharaoh's wife had accepted Moses (peace be on him), the Prophet of her times. However, given Pharaoh's open hatred and persecution of Moses and his people, she did not tell him about her faith. Yet she continued to live by her new faith, and guarded her spirituality. These were some incidences from the times of early Islam and Judaism. Today we are blessed to have a large brotherhood of Muslims. So the new converts should also seek this brotherhood for comfort, and forming new friendships.
There is also a very special prayer in the Holy Quran that converts (especially) should keep reciting: *Rabbana Laa Tuzigh Qaloobanaa Baada Izz Hadaitanaa Wa Hablanaa MillaDunKaa Rahmaa*. "Our Lord, let not our hearts become perverse after Thou hast guided us; and bestow on us mercy from Thyself; surely, Thou alone art the Bestower." [Chapter Ale Imran, Verse 9]

Garden of Peace Team

Please submit your question to joinislam@gmail.com or mail it to Garden of Peace, 11205 Hambright Rd, Huntersville, NC 28078. All questions will be answered.

Conditions of Initiation (Bai'at) to Islam

By: Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him)

- I. That he/she shall abstain from Shirk (association of any partner with God) right up to the day of his/her death.
- II. That he/she shall keep away from falsehood, fornication, adultery, trespasses of the eye, debauchery, dissipation, cruelty, dishonesty, mischief and rebellion; and will not permit himself/herself to be carried away by passions, however strong they might be.
- III. That he/she shall regularly offer the five daily prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the Tahajud (pre-dawn supererogatory prayers) and invoking Darood (blessings) on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); that he/she shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him.
- IV. That under the impulse of any passions, he/she shall cause no harm whatsoever to the creatures of Allah in general, and Muslims in particular, neither by his/her tongue nor by his/her hands nor by any other means.
- V. That he/she shall remain faithful to God in all circumstances of life, in sorrow and happiness, adversity and prosperity, in felicity and trial; and shall in all conditions remain resigned to the decree of Allah and keep himself/herself ready to face all kinds of indignities and sufferings in His way and shall never turn away from it at the onslaught of any misfortune; on the

- contrary, he/she shall march forward.
- VI. That he/she shall refrain from following un-islamic customs and lustful inclinations, and shall completely submit himself/herself to the authority of the Holy Quran; and shall make the Word of God and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the guiding principle in every walk of his/her life.
- VII. That he/she shall entirely give up pride and vanity and shall pass all his/her life in humbleness, cheerfulness, forbearance and meekness.
- VIII. That he/she shall hold faith, the honor of faith, and the cause of Islam dearer to him/her than his/her life, wealth, honor, children and all other dear ones.
- IX. That he/she shall keep himself/herself occupied in the service of God's creatures for His sake only; and shall endeavor to benefit mankind to the best of his/her God-given abilities and powers.
- X. That he/she shall enter into a bond of brotherhood with this humble servant of God, pledging obedience to me in everything good, for the sake of Allah, and remain faithful to it till the day of his/her death; that he/she shall exert such a high devotion in the observance of this bond as is not to be found in any other worldly relationship and connections demanding devoted dutifulness.



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 Garden of Peace is a monthly newsletter for the Nau-Khulaba'en (new converts) published by Majlis Khuddam-ul-Ahmediyya, USA. All new converts are welcome to submit their own articles, experiences and opinions to the newsletter team. Please send your request to: By Mail: 11205 Hambright Rd, Huntersville, NC 28078. By Email: joinislam@gmail.com - Garden of Peace Team: Ahmad Anwar, Bilal Rama, Afif Mian, Aladdin Ahmed.



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